COURSE OVERVIEW AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Psychology 367.01: Introduction to Social Psychology
Spring 2005, Mon/Wed 11:30am-1:18pm, University Hall 43

Instructor

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Office: 121S Lazenby Hall (Main Floor, go through the door across the main hallway from LZ 122 and it is the door immediately to the right. Try the knob or knock if it is locked. Mine is the cube on the far right side.)

Required Texts


Statement of course goals

Students taking Psychology 367.01 should acquire knowledge of scientific theory and research in the major topic areas of social psychology. With the aid of homework assignments, students should discover the relevance of the course material to situations of everyday life. Further, they should gain an understanding of the strong (but usually unrecognized) social forces that influence others' and their own behavior in such settings as home, school, and work. The practice in written expression provided by in-class writing and short-essay homework assignments, together with written feedback from the instructor on both content and style, is intended to help in the development of writing skills.
**Course format**

The work of the course includes six paper assignments, two 45-minute exams, and a 90-minute final exam. Class meetings involve lecture and discussion, and some material will be discussed in class that is not covered in the assigned text or readings.

**Importance of written work**

Psychology 367.01 is a second-level writing course. As such, it requires substantial written work from students. The paper assignments are intended to develop writing skills and solidify students' understanding of the lectures and readings.

**Completion of course work**

The university has determined that twelve pages of formal written work (i.e., six two-page papers) is the minimum amount of written work acceptable for a second level writing course. Therefore, in order to receive a non-failing grade in the course, a student must complete all six paper assignments. Failure to complete any one of the papers constitutes failure to meet university standards concerning this course. Therefore, a student who fails to complete any paper cannot receive credit for this course.

In order to receive a non-failing grade, a student also must complete one midterm exam and the final exam.

Late papers will not be accepted, and make-up exams will not be given. An exception may be granted to a student who provides a validated excuse to the instructor prior to the paper due date or exam date. If you foresee being unable to turn in a paper or take an exam on the assigned date, contact the instructor immediately to request an extension.

Incompletes will not be given; students who are not on schedule to complete the required work are advised to drop the course in a timely fashion (i.e., by the seventh week of the quarter).

**Basis of final grades**

The final grade is based upon 190 total possible points: 90 points for the six paper assignments, 50 points for the two midterm exams (25 points each), 35 points for the final exam, 15 points for class participation. No assignments for extra credit will be given.

Grade distributions will be based upon the performance of all students in your class. In general, the class average grade on an assignment will be equivalent to a B-. Grades above the class-average will be equivalent to a B or better. Grades below the class-average will be equivalent to a C+ or worse. The average final grade for students in your class will be a B-.
Handouts

Deadline dates for the papers and midterm exams, as well as the reading assignments, are listed on the Course Schedule.

Academic Misconduct Warning:

All work must be your own. Cheating or plagiarism will be reported through official university channels, and the consequences will be severe. If you are unwise enough to plagiarize, the minimum punishment is usually failure in the course. If the case of plagiarism or cheating is especially blatant, you may be expelled from the university. To avoid missing out on a good college GPA, or even your degree, paraphrase and cite your sources.

The papers and assignments are designed for what you can do based on what we are covering in this class and the skills you have already learned. They assume you will do your own work.
## Course Schedule (**subject to change**)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 March 28</td>
<td>Welcome! / Introduction</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Writing / Methodology</td>
<td>Chapter 2 (22-31), Anson (80-84, 121-146)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 April 4</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Chapter 2 (32-51), Anson (147-188)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Paper 1 Due</td>
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<td>3 April 11</td>
<td>Social Cognition</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (94-104), Chapter 4 (116-132)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (104-116)</td>
<td>Paper 2 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 <strong>April 18</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Exam I</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Stereotyping</td>
<td>Chapter 5 (132-150)</td>
<td>Peer Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 April 25</td>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>Chapter 5 (150-184)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Attitudes / Persuasion</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (184-213)</td>
<td>Paper 2 Revision</td>
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<td>6 May 2</td>
<td>Cognitive Dissonance</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (214-226)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Conformity / Compliance</td>
<td>Chapter 7 (226-248)</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 May 9</td>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>Chapter 7 (248-262)</td>
<td><strong>Exam II</strong></td>
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<td><strong>May 11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exam II</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 May 16</td>
<td>Group Processes</td>
<td>Chapter 8 (262-286)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>Attraction</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Paper 4 Due</td>
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<td>9 May 23</td>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>Paper 5 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 May 30</td>
<td>NO CLASS—Memorial Day and Jamie’s Birthday!</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td>June 1</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June 8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final Exam (11:30-1:18pm in UH 43)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
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All chapters are from Brehm, Kassin, & Fein (2005)

* = This should be read before writing the first paper
**PAPER ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS**

**Overview.** Writing effectively, powerfully, and concisely is a valuable skill, no matter what your ultimate career goal is. In this course, we will help you become a better writer by giving you practice at writing short papers and by giving you feedback on your papers. In this document, we will offer some helpful hints on how to go about writing your papers.

**Due time.** Papers are due at the start of class on the dates indicated on the schedule. Rules regarding late papers are explained on the syllabus.

**Space limit and font size.** Papers must be no more than two typed or computer printed pages. Papers should be written in a font that fits no more than 12 characters within an inch of text. If you use a nonproportional font such as courier, pica, or elite, 10 point fits exactly 12 characters per inch of writing. However, proportional fonts such as Times New Roman fit more letters within the same amount of space. Thus, it is your responsibility to make sure that no more than 12 characters fit within in inch of text in your paper. Below are examples of some common fonts with the allowable font size.

- Courier (10 point)
- Times New Roman (12 point)

**Formatting.** Papers must be typed or computer printed in a double-spaced format. The papers should have one-inch left, right, top, and bottom margins. Any paper with smaller type, smaller margins, not double-spaced, or that exceeds the maximum number of characters per inch, lines, or pages allowable will not be accepted. When in doubt, use the attached sample paper as a guide or ask your instructor. Your papers should be as close to the formatting in the sample paper as possible.
**Grading.** The instructor will grade primarily for substantive content, but also for the mechanics and style of writing, including spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and overall organization. Instructor comments on your papers will point out both good and bad points of both substance and style.

**Style.** Papers should be written in a scientific writing style, not the expository writing style often taught in English courses. Your goal should be to write as efficiently as possible. Don't waste space by using unnecessary words in making a point -- wasting space in this way will prevent you from making additional arguments that may improve your grade. *This sort of writing style requires that you write a draft and then revise it repeatedly, editing it over and over until it is tightly written.* The difference between good writers and bad ones is not so much the quality of their first drafts but rather the number of times they revise those drafts.

**Suggestions regarding strategy.** Always give your paper a title. This tells the reader your topic and, perhaps also, your position on it. Try writing the title of your paper and a one- or two-sentence statement of its major point(s) before writing anything else. You may be surprised to discover how effective this device is in helping you to organize your thoughts. Assume that the audience reading your paper has the same background as you had before you began taking this course -- don't assume that the reader has a Ph.D. in social psychology. Explain fully what you have learned from the lectures and reading assignments.

**Paper organization.** Organize each paper you write around a central thesis, idea, or point. The assertion you wish to make should be stated clearly in a sentence or two in the introductory paragraph of the paper. In subsequent paragraphs, make a step-by-step argument in support of your thesis. Your paper should end with a concluding paragraph that summarizes and integrates your overall argument.
**Drawing on lectures and readings.** One purpose of the paper assignments is for your instructor to see how well you understand the material from lectures and readings and how well you can apply that material in thinking about a new problem. Thus, the information provided to you by the instructor and the text represents the building blocks that you should use in constructing your paper. It is crucial that you cite as much information as possible from lectures and readings to support your arguments in the papers. Use the papers to demonstrate that you have understood the lectures, read the text, and can effectively apply the material to a new problem. The more course material you effectively use in making your arguments, the better your paper grade will be.

**Write in your own words.** If you are going to become a better writer by doing these assignments, you need to write your papers on your own. Although it is often appropriate to quote other authors word-for-word in papers, doing so in this course defeats the purpose of the assignments. Show us that you understand the course material by explaining it in your own words, not by using the words of another author.

**Proper use of citations.** When you are explaining specific material from the lectures or readings, be sure to indicate the source of the ideas. When using a general idea that was presented in class or in the text, cite the source of the idea in parentheses at the end of the sentence. If you absolutely must use a direct quotation, indicate that you are using someone else's words with quotation marks, and state the source in parentheses at the end of the quote. Using material from lectures or text without proper citation is plagiarism. Be careful to give other authors credit for their work. Plagiarism is easy to detect, and the consequences (for you) are serious. To avoid problems and become a better writer, paraphrase, cite, and revise carefully.

**Your intuition and personal experiences.** A common mistake people make in writing papers for this course is citing their own personal experiences as evidence supporting their arguments. Doing so does not help to demonstrate your understanding of the course material, so you should avoid this practice. Your own intuition is also not a solid basis for supporting an argument; cite course material instead.
**Placement of name.** Do not include a cover-page. Instead, place the title at the top of the first page. Write your name on the back of the second page. This policy allows for all papers to be graded anonymously.

**Your likely performance.** Regardless of your previous writing experience, you will almost certainly find the two-page format used in this course challenging. Almost everyone receives relatively low grades on their first few papers. People who think carefully about the feedback they receive on those papers see their writing (and their grades) improve dramatically over the course of the quarter. So don't be disappointed if you get low grades in the beginning -- use the feedback you get to improve over the duration of the course.

**Additional Resources.** For help in writing style, obtain a copy of the writing manual (on the first page of this syllabus) see the Writing Center (292-5607), or, of course, ask your instructor!

**Conclusion.** The writing assignments in this course are designed to challenge you and ultimately to improve your writing ability. If you follow these guidelines, your papers should show steady improvement over the quarter, and you will end up a better writer.
**Notes on Grading**

1. It is possible to earn up to 15 points for each paper.

2. The 15 possible points for each paper are awarded as follows:

   Up to 10 points for CONTENT (e.g., success in integrating course material, accuracy of facts and interpretations, successful analysis of assigned problem).

   ![Score Scale](image1)

   Up to 5 points for TECHNIQUE, and STYLE (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, effectiveness of organization, comprehensibility of sentences, conciseness).

   ![Score Scale](image2)

**Notes on Grading for Revision Paper**

1. It is possible to earn up to 15 points for each paper.

2. The 15 possible points for the revision paper will be awarded based on *amount of improvement* from the first draft. The 15 points will be broken down in a manner determined by the instructor.

   IMPORTANT – Because grades for the revised paper are based on improvement, it is possible to get a high score for the first draft, but a very low score on the second draft if you make no revisions or very few revisions. Even the very best papers can be improved! The first draft of the revision paper will be graded as would any other paper. It will not be graded as a “rough draft”.

**Sample Paper**

Attached you will find an example of a paper written for this course. This particular paper was chosen as an example because it provides a model for many of the points discussed above. The topic for this paper is provided below.

*Sample paper topic.* A few years ago, a two year-old child was kidnapped from a crowded shopping mall and eventually murdered by two ten year-old boys. Although the kidnapping was witnessed by hundreds of people and by surveillance cameras, nobody intervened to save the boy. According to Latané & Darley’s (1970) theory of prosocial behavior, why did nobody help the screaming child in the shopping mall?
The Manchester Murders: Why Nobody Helped

In Manchester, England, a two-year-old boy was abducted in a shopping mall and murdered by two ten-year-old boys. As the victim was dragged from the mall through the streets, hundreds of people witnessed his screaming and struggling. This incident led many to wonder how could so many witnesses allow this brutal murder to occur. According to Latane and Darley (1970), several factors probably decreased the likelihood of helping.

One thing that must happen in order for help to be given is noticing that an emergency has occurred (text, p. 405). If people do not notice an emergency, they are unlikely to help. More specifically, if people are distracted, they are unlikely to notice an emergency (text, p. 405). Because shopping malls are typically noisy and full of activity, the screams of the child may have been drowned out. Similarly, witnesses may have been distracted by their shopping tasks, especially if they were in a hurry. Such distractions could have decreased the likelihood of people noticing the abduction.

Even after noticing something happening, the witness must interpret it as an emergency in order to help (text, p. 406). If a number of alternative interpretations for an event exist, witnesses are less likely to interpret it as such (text, p. 406). Two-year-olds often scream and struggle in shopping malls, and ten-year-old kidnappers are very rare, so the older boys may have been perceived as the victim’s brothers rather than his kidnappers. Therefore, shoppers might not have perceived the somewhat ambiguous event as an emergency (lecture, 11/16/01).

Even if a shopper did suspect that an emergency was occurring, pluralistic ignorance may have inhibited helping (lecture, 11/16/01). When an event is ambiguous, people rely on others’ behavior to interpret the event (lecture, 11/16/01). When nobody rushed to the child’s assistance, people who suspected that an emergency was occurring might have concluded that
they misinterpreted the situation.

Even if observers notice an event and interpret it as an emergency, they must take responsibility for helping before they will provide assistance (lecture, 11/16/01). If many observers are present when an emergency occurs, responsibility for helping is likely to be diffused across them (text, pp. 406-407). As a result, each observer becomes less likely to act. Responsibility for helping may have been further reduced because people may have believed that mall security guards were responsible for handling emergency situations (text, p. 407). Thus, the presence of many observers and some explicitly responsible individuals may have reduced the responsibility felt by each person.

In addition to the above factors inhibiting helping behavior, noticing an emergency, interpreting it as an emergency, and taking responsibility for an emergency each require a time investment (lecture, 11/16/01). Because many people were busy with their errands, they may not have been willing to take the time to intervene in the potential emergency.

Even if there is adequate time for individuals to help, the personal costs of helping might prevent intervention (lecture, 11/16/01). Because disrupting a kidnapping may entail great personal risk, individuals may choose not to help in order to avoid putting themselves at risk. In addition, the shoppers may not have had the physical ability or expertise to thwart a kidnapping.

In summary, although we like to think that the presence of many people ensures that someone will help in an emergency, many situational factors discourage helping. The Manchester murder is just one example that illustrates the many obstacles standing between a person needing help and its provision.
If you feel you may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Additionally, please contact the Office for Disability Services at (614) 292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall with documentation of your disability to allow them to arrange reasonable accommodations for you. Their website is www.ods.ohio-state.edu

This information is available in alternative format upon request.